



ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

April 17, 2017
Glassen Education Center
Rose Lake Shooting Range
14500 Peacock Road
Bath Township, Michigan

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (AAC)

PRESENT

Scott Norris, Chair
Duncan Wyeth, Co-Chair (*via conference call*)
Ken Buchholtz (*via conference call*)
Rick Briggs
Cindy Burkhour
Michael Harris
Justin Lippe
Sara Peurakoski (*via conference call*)
Kimberly Woolridge

ABSENT

Al Bobrofsky
Vendela Collins
Jon Edgerly
Carolyn Grawi

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)

Stacy Welling Haughey, AAC Upper Peninsula Sponsor (*via conference call*)
Dan Lord, ADA Coordinator
Yolanda Taylor, Assistant to the AAC

PRESENT FROM THE DNR ACCESSIBILITY TEAM (A-TEAM)

Lynne Thoma, Fisheries
Christie Bayus and Tamara Jorkasky, Grants
Jami Selden, for Lt. Steve Burton, Law Enforcement
Kirk Lapham, Legislative and Legal Affairs
Diana Engle, Michigan Historical Center
Dave Haupt, Marketing and Outreach
Mike Evanoff, Parks & Recreation
Sara Cummins, Wildlife

INTERPRETERS

Stacy Dildy

GENERAL PUBLIC

Tom Jones, Michigan Operation Freedom Outdoors
Tom Tynan, resident of Howell, Michigan (*representing the deaf community*)
Brian Wilkinson, Southeast Livingston County Recreation Authority
Tim Pifher, Flint Regional Chapter-Safari Club International
Ron Wilson, Retiree, Department of Natural Resources

OTHERS PRESENT

Sharon Ellis, State ADA Compliance Director, Department of Civil Rights (*via conference call*)
Dennis Fox, Recruitment and Retention Manager, DNR
Aiden McLearn, Rose Lake Shooting Range Supervisor, and staff

REGULAR MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Norris called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. with roll call. He also announced that the range is live today, but the meeting room is sound proofed so the gunfire will not be loud.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Norris asked the council if they had any additions/corrections to the December 13, 2016 Minutes. No corrections or edits were offered for the December 2016 Minutes.

Chair Norris requested a motion to approve the December 13, 2016 Minutes; Michael Harris motioned to approve the Minutes; Kimberly Woolridge seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried and the December 13, 2016 Minutes were approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Norris asked if anyone present from the general public would like to address the council at this time or at the end of the meeting. Nobody offered comments.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Sharon Schafer, the council's executive sponsor, could not attend the meeting so Dan Lord, the department's ADA Coordinator, will take the lead in providing department updates.

Lakeport State Park

Dan reported that a settlement was reached regarding a complaint that was filed against Lakeport State Park. Some improvements have been completed at the park, with additional improvements scheduled throughout the year.

The council asked for a briefing as to what the complaint was about. Dan Lord, Kirk Lapham and Mike Evanoff gave the council a brief overview. Most of the deficiencies identified involved the day use parking area and other amenities such as beach access to the high water mark and the toilet/shower building. Mike reported that the DNR Grayling Construction Crew worked on the parking area and trail to the day use area, a brock dock will be added to access the beach to the high water mark, and improvements will be made to the toilet/shower building entrance and stalls.

The council discussed the process and how these matters can be settled outside the court systems. Dan Lord commented that, normally, people will bring these matters to the attention of a park manager first and, the majority of the time, they are addressed more immediately and outside the court system. This complainant filed directly with the federal court so there was no direct contact or communication with the park prior to filing his complaint. Council member Kim Woolridge commented that it is best to work directly with the departments first, or file with the Department of Civil Rights who, in turn, will work directly with the departments to resolve the issue or complaint.

The council requested that they receive a short presentation at a future meeting on how the process works and where people can find the information on the DNR's website, as well as other sites. Council members can then educate and inform others, and encourage them to work directly with the department to resolve these issues versus the court system.

Diana Engle commented that every web page on the state's system has information about where and how to file an ADA complaint. Evanoff commented that 95% of the time a complaint is submitted directly to a park manager and is usually resolved fairly quickly.

Council member Rick Briggs asked if there were training programs available to park managers and staff, and if the managers are assessing their parks now to make needed improvements and avoid complaints into the future.

Dan commented that the department has taken steps to train employees. Mike Evanoff and other park staff have developed the assessment tools/checklists. Once the tools/checklists are finalized, they will share them with all park managers to start making their own assessments, and make improvements as their budgets allow. Evanoff also commented that additional training is being planned for their division's in-service training (all employee) session this year.

LOTS and ADA Compliance

Dan further reported that the Land Ownership Tracking System (LOTS) is a 4.5 million acre tracking system for the land that is owned or managed by the department. The LOTS program is in the process of being updated and is also being reviewed to ensure ADA is being assessed, incorporated and in compliance.

Executive Office

Dan further reported that Dennis Knapp, the department's Chief of Staff, tribal negotiator and Natural Resources Commission meeting coordinator, retired. Most of his duties have been shifted to Trevor VanDyke, the former Legislative Liaison. Anna Moody will now take over the duties as the Legislative Liaison in the office of Legislative and Legal Affairs. Also, Ken Silven, former deputy press secretary for Governor Snyder, was recently hired as the department's Special Advisor of Communications.

Accessibility Team

The department's internal accessibility team is made up of representatives from each division. Vicki Brown, from the Wildlife Division, was the team's chair for quite some time. The new chair is now Diana Engle with the Michigan Historical Center, and Christie Bayus with Grants as the co-chair.

The conversation then shifted into a discussion about how the department receives public comments about their user's experiences. Council member Woolridge asked if visitors have a way of commenting on their experience at a state park, campground, game area, or other facility. She highlighted the fact that everybody's experience can be different based on ethnic background, age, residence, geographic location, experience, or whatever the case may be.

Dan Lord responded that the park system used to have paper comment cards at each park but they were discontinued due to the cost of printing. However, people can submit e-comments through the department's website regarding their experiences. For example, the comments are submitted to the park supervisors/managers to review and respond, as well as their division's legal analyst to identify or recognize issues that need to be addressed at a higher level. Each division also has their own individual e-mail address where people can send their questions or comments directly to a specific division (i.e. Wildlife, Fisheries, Parks and Recreation).

The council requested a tour of the department's website and how people would navigate it to find accessible recreation, make comments, etc., also at a future meeting.

The council also asked, from a marketing perspective, how the department invites people to make comments, bring things to their attention, work cooperatively with the park managers/staff, or use the state's process if they do have a complaint. Dan Lord responded that some of this is done through friends groups, campground hosts, staff interaction, and public participation.

Members also suggested that staff can reach out and ask people to keep an eye out for accessibility issues and invite them to bring them to their attention. They can also walk around and ask visitors/campers to provide comments about their experiences, ask people as they check in or out, through Facebook, twitter, and other media relation avenues. Walk around and ask questions. It means more when someone can comment in person, especially for events. It also helps for future court cases or complaints, to have a mechanism in place where people can express their concerns or needs without having to go to court.

Sharon Ellis, the state's ADA Coordinator, was on the phone. She mentioned that she is starting to work with Pure Michigan regarding these marketing initiatives and will take these comments back to them. Any council members or staff that has additional thoughts or ideas can submit them to Sharon at ellis1@michigan.gov.

The council was also encouraged to ask these same questions at the next meeting when the Marketing and Outreach chief will be present.

WELCOME TO GLASSEN EDUCATION CENTER/ROSE LAKE SHOOTING RANGE

Dennis Fox, the department's Recruitment and Retention manager, gave the council an overview on the history of the shooting range and the Hal and Jean Glassen Education Center. The center took approximately 20+ years to get it built/established, and it just opened up this year. The shooting range was renovated from a gravel pit-type shooting range to the present footprint.

Dennis provided a little bit of history about Hal and Jean Glassen, for whom the center is named after, and the Glassen Memorial Foundation.

Hal and Jean Glassen

Hal Glassen was born in 1906 and Jean Glassen was born in 1908, both from Wisconsin. Their careers brought them to Michigan where Hal practiced law and Jean worked as a biologist with the Michigan Department of Public Health. Both Hal and Jean were avid hunters who believed in the scientific management of wildlife. They were lifelong conservationists who supported research and programs aimed at habitat improvement, sustainable harvest through controlled hunting, and understanding the carrying capacity of land for wildlife. Married for nearly 60 years, Hal and Jean established the Glassen Memorial Foundation before their deaths to continue the ambitions and goals to which they dedicated their lives.

Hal and Jean Glassen Memorial Foundation

The foundation is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization that was established in 1992 to receive and administer funds for charitable and educational purposes. They provide financial assistance in the form of grants, scholarships, matching funds, and other support.

The foundation donated \$200,000 to be used as a match for federal funds to build the center. The National Wild Turkey Federation donated all of the tables and chairs for the center. The animal/fish mounts were donated by Tom Huggler, President of the Hal and Jean Glassen Memorial Foundation, and some were transferred from the former Rose Lake Field Office.

The Glassen Education Center is available for people to reserve for meetings, or hunting and shooting educational sessions, including organizations that are working with the department or have a conservation/DNR-related mission. They are in the process of creating a web page where people can reserve the center's conference rooms or facility on-line. In the meantime, reservations can be made by calling 517-284-6042 until a phone number is created for the center. The two conference rooms can be combined into one, and both rooms have smart screen TVs as well as conference call capabilities.

The standard hours of operation for the shooting range are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Thursday through Monday, from November 16 through September 30. It is closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays. As the opening day of firearm season approaches, the range offers longer hours and more days. The range offers a rifle/pistol range (rifles, muzzleloaders, handguns and shotguns with slugs only), with 10 stations at 100 yards, 10 stations at 50 yards, 10 stations at 25 yards, and 5 stations at 10 yards. It also offers a ten station hand trap range (shotguns/clay targets), archery range from 10 to approximately 100 yards with life size animal targets, and is also available for youth groups and hunter education programs.

The shooting stations were designed with moveable benches to accommodate wheelchairs, the pathways to the center and all of the shooting stations are concrete sidewalks, and there is an elevated hunting blind on site. The entire facility is ADA compliant.

Dennis further mentioned they also have a trust fund grant application for all shooting ranges statewide which will be mentioned at the council's June meeting. He reminded the council that he and the range manager are available after the meeting to conduct a tour of the shooting range, and also mentioned they are looking forward to the council's input and suggestions for additional improvements.

Council member Michael Harris commented that this facility has the best ADA accessible parking lot he has ever used.

RESTORATIVE OUTDOOR SERVICES

Eric Niemi, Owner of Restorative Outdoor Services, and Kaitlyn Grandgood, gave the council a presentation on the business they are starting up to provide adaptive outdoor recreation and rehabilitation services for the elderly and people with disabilities, with a focus on those suffering from traumatic brain injury. Both Eric and Kaitlyn live in the Traverse City area and are certified brain injury and rehabilitation specialists. They both have backgrounds or personal experience with cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury rehabilitation, neurological and psychotherapy rehabilitation, including equine-assisted psychotherapy. They are also both life-long outdoor enthusiasts and sportsmen.

Through their personal and professional experiences, it became clear to them that people with disabilities often face barriers partaking in recreational activities or finding new recreational opportunities, and also often deal with social isolation or depression. By combining adaptability and authenticity, their hope/mission is to spark or reignite a passion while increasing the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by providing opportunities to experience the full range of outdoor experiences through authentic, adaptive services and equipment.

Work is being completed on Eric's custom fabricated fishing vessel to provide safe and stable transfers for clients who utilize wheelchairs, other mobility equipment or just have an unsteady gait. He has also designed adaptive fishing equipment to provide strong arm or custom wrist support, gripping devices, boat, wheelchair, chest or torso rod holders, and electric, ambidextrous reels. For hunting, his adaptive equipment will include wheelchair accessible hunting blinds, a fabricated collapsible duck blind for waterfowl hunting, as well as target practice and skeet shooting.

In their first year of service (May through December), clients can request services in Antrim, Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties at a location of their choice. Services will include guided adaptive angling at a location of their choice, or hunting opportunities on state lands, but they are also encouraging clients to contact them for any other specific outdoor activity. Hunting

services will begin in September. They will expand their range of services as they grow, but they want to make sure everybody has an authentic experience.

The council offered Eric and Kaitlyn numerous suggestions and guidance, as well as constructive criticisms, to make sure they are successful with the services they want to provide. With all of the legal expertise and experience on the council, both Eric and Kaitlyn were grateful to the council for their input and were glad they vetted their ideas to the council prior to getting their business off the ground.

Council member Kim Woolridge also mentioned that the 2017 Brain Injury Association of Michigan's annual conference is scheduled for September 14-15, 2017 at the Lansing Center in downtown Lansing. This would be an excellent opportunity for them to not only attend the conference, but to network and sign up as an exhibitor. The link to register for the conference is <http://www.biami.org/afc>.

Restorative Outdoor Services (ROS) can be contacted by calling 231-714-4450, by e-mail at restorativeoutdoorservices@gmail.com, or by visiting their website at www.rosmichigan.com.

Other council members also offered information about upcoming events or opportunities. The council wished Eric and Kaitlyn all the success in the world, and commented that it is so refreshing to see such a young couple with a passion for improving everyone's quality of life. They wished them both much success and offered their contact information if they ever need additional guidance, support or assistance. A couple members also offered to meet with them after the meeting to discuss opportunities and partnerships. Eric, in turn, invited the council's further input by asking them to review his proposal and his website, and welcomed any additional suggestions or improvements by e-mail or by phone.

WILDLIFE DIVISION RECREATION GRANT APPLICATION

Kerry Fitzpatrick, grant coordinator, and Cindy Burkhour, chair of the council's subcommittee on infrastructure and natural resource programs, presented an overview of the wildlife division's grant application for a proposed project at Lake LeVasseur in the Upper Peninsula. Cindy commented that this grant application/proposed project has already been reviewed and vetted through the department's internal accessibility team and the council's subcommittee during previous meetings. What is being presented today incorporates all of the comments and suggestions for improvements that were received to-date. They are here today to seek the council's endorsement and support of this proposal/grant application.

Lake LeVasseur is located in the middle of the Upper Peninsula (Marquette County) on the Lake Superior shoreline, approximately 15 minutes east of Marquette. It is a very remote, unstaffed location, but the proposal is to provide accessible waterfowl hunting, bird watching, and fishing access. The project will include a larger parking/turn around area with two accessible parking spaces, and an accessible compacted limestone pathway that leads to a) a viewing platform, b) fishing area, and c) accessible waterfowl hunting or bird watching blind. Kerry mentioned the only other accessible hunting blind and viewing area is in Newberry, 1 hour away.

Kerry and Cindy entertained questions and additional suggestions from the council, and were gently warned about using the verbiage "universally accessible" as that term is not always accurate. Kerry responded that this is phase one of the project. All additional suggestions for improvements, as well as concerns, received will be considered in a future phase of the project.

Cindy, as the subcommittee chair, motioned that:

- *The Accessibility Advisory Council (Council) has acknowledged that the wildlife division's Lake LeVasseur grant application and proposed project meet the acceptable scoring criteria for accessibility;*
- *The applicant sought input from individuals with a disability or disability advocates, affecting the final design;*
- *The Council supports and endorses the Lake LeVasseur project; and*
- *The Council recommends that the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board approve the Lake LeVasseur grant application.*

Rick Briggs seconded the motion; the motion unanimously carried.

Cindy thanked Kerry for his patience while the department's internal team and the subcommittee worked through the process (for the first time) of presenting and bringing forward these projects and grant proposals to the full council. His patience was greatly appreciated.

Ken Buchholtz commented that they are working on building duck hunting blinds and that they will be offered on a first come, first served basis if the wildlife division is interested in obtaining one for this project.

COUNCIL UPDATES

Chair Norris reported there are currently four vacancies on the council. He asked that council members review the roster and the make-up of the council to identify any other people, organizations, etc. that should be represented or have a seat on the council. Suggestions should be sent to Yolanda Taylor prior to the June meeting. Vacancies and suggested candidates will be discussed at the next meeting.

Chair Norris also asked council members that are not already on a subcommittee to get signed up for one.

CLOSING BUSINESS

Chair Norris commented that, for future project/grant application reviews, the documents should be sent to all council members (not just the subcommittee members) to review so they can get their comments, questions and concerns addressed by the subcommittee prior to the regular meeting. This should allow time for all council members to comment and get their concerns addressed prior to the regular meeting, as well as save time.

Chair Norris reminded the council that Dennis Fox will give the members and staff a tour of the shooting range after the meeting adjourns.

ADJOURN

Chair Norris requested a motion to adjourn.

Cindy Burkhour motioned for adjournment; Michael Harris seconded the motion; the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.